GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

at American Institutes for Research

Teacher Leadership



District and School Leader Readiness Tool

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Introduction

As interest in teacher leadership has grown, many leading organizations have developed tools and guidance to support schools, districts, and teacher leaders themselves. For instance, the National Network of State Teachers of the Year developed resources on teacher leader career pathways and advocacy approaches, as well as teacher leader standards. Likewise, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards developed teacher leadership competencies. Regional educational laboratories also have worked to better understand teacher leadership, specifically what we can learn about teacher leadership from the research literature.

In collaboration and consultation with the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest Educator Effectiveness Research Alliance, REL Midwest developed this tool to help district and school administrators gauge the extent to which district and school leaders have the necessary training, support, and culture to facilitate the identification and ongoing development of teacher leaders. The results of this assessment can be used to generate a list of areas for improvement, resources needed, and next steps to increase readiness to foster effective teacher leadership.

About This Tool

REL Midwest researchers conducted a review of the literature on teacher leadership and worked with stakeholders in the Midwestern states to identify the most critical elements necessary for successful teacher leadership. The literature and stakeholder input shaped the content of the tool. School and district leaders, working either on their own or with colleagues, can use this tool to evaluate the extent to which existing strategies and context adequately promote and support teacher leadership.

How to Use the Tool. The elements of district and school readiness included in this tool are organized into three domains and related subdomains:

(1.)	CULTURE and CONTEXT
	Vision for Teacher Leadership
	Professional Culture of Collaborative Inquiry
	Collaborative, Shared Leadership
2.	ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES
	Vision for Teacher Leadership Roles
(Clear Goals and Expectations
(Ongoing Support for Teachers, Teacher Leaders, and School Leaders 14
3.	SYSTEMS and STRUCTURES
(Access to Data and Technology
(Access to Materials and Resources for Collaboration
(Recruitment and Selection
	Recognition and Compensation
(3.5 Time

Each subdomain includes indicators with possible sources of evidence and look-fors to assess readiness and assign a rating. School and district leaders can use this tool to determine how their school and district exhibit the elements necessary to foster and support teacher leadership and identify areas for growth.

Instructions. For each indicator, read the primary indicator language and consider the look-fors, introduced as "District [School] leaders may demonstrate or support this by...." These look-fors are not intended to be all-inclusive; rather, they provide a few examples of how you might characterize the level of readiness of your district or school.

Assign a rating for each indicator, based on the following rating scale. You also may write notes or leave comments related to the specific indicators.

Not Evident
 The district

The district/school exhibits no elements of the indicator.

Developing

The district/school exhibits few elements and is working to develop them.

Partially in Place

The district/school has some elements in place and needs reflection and refinement to determine and improve its effectiveness.

Already in Place

The district/school has most or all the elements in place, and the elements have been proven effective; the district/school will continually review and improve.

At the end of each domain, please note the types of evidence or experience you used to determine the ratings for indicators in the domain. Working on your own or with colleagues, you can use the ratings to reflect on the district's or school's strengths and areas for growth for each domain. You also can identify next steps to build on strengths and grow teachers' leadership competencies.

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
1.1 Vision for Teacher Leadership	District-Level Indicators	
	 1.1.1: District leaders identify and document a clear vision, rationale, and purpose for teacher leadership at the district level (Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession [CSTP], 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Fostering conversations and two-way communication with educators, including teachers and teacher leaders, to establish a common vision and goals for teacher leadership aligned to district improvement goals and priorities. Communicating a clear vision for teacher leadership to school leaders and teachers. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	1.1.2: School leaders identify and document a clear vision, rationale, and purpose for teacher leadership at the school level (CSTP, 2010). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in Place
	 Fostering conversations and two-way communication with teachers and teacher leaders to establish and communicate a clear vision for school improvement and each teacher leader role (Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate [BTLC] Program, 2013). 	Already in Place
	 Knowing what leadership gaps to fill to achieve school improvement goals (Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement [GLISI], 2015). 	

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

1.1 Evidence

1.1 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
1.2 Professional Culture of Collaborative	District-Level Indicators	
Inquiry	 1.2.1: District leaders establish or enhance the collaborative processes necessary to create a culture of inquiry. District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Engaging in two-way communication regarding teacher leadership. Convening school leaders and teacher leaders from across the district regularly to share best practices, solve problems, and collaborate (New Leaders, 2015). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	 1.2.2: School leaders cultivate a climate of professional dialogue and intellectual curiosity (BTLC Program, 2013). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Building communication processes that make it safe for people to say what is on their minds (GLISI, 2015). Actively listening to teachers, checking to ensure teacher understanding (GLISI, 2015). Being willing to change their viewpoint based on the valid opinions of others (GLISI, 2015). Working to understand others' perspectives (GLISI, 2015). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	1.2.3: School leaders foster strong teacher communities (Caine & Caine, 2000; CSTP, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by working to ensure that teachers at the school are supportive of each other personally and professionally (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	 1.2.4: School leaders encourage a school culture of growth and continuous improvement wherein all staff are open to feedback (e.g., nonteacher leaders offer opinions on school improvement). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Respecting and valuing the ideas and opinions of teachers at the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Celebrating the successes of teachers at the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

1.2 Evidence

1.2 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
1.3 Collaborative, Shared Leadership	District-Level Indicators	
Leadership	 1.3.1: District leaders establish a strong structure of leadership shared among district leaders, school leaders, and teacher leaders. District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Encouraging school leaders to be transparent in their decision making with staff. Modeling collaborative, shared leadership at the district level. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	1.3.2: School leaders engage in shared "decision making with teachers through a variety of staff structures that distribute leadership within collaborative groups, for example, professional learning communities, staff committees, leadership teams, school growth goal teams, professional development committees, department teams, curriculum committees, study groups, teaching teams, and hiring committees" (Yukon Education, 2013).	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by	
	 Sharing decisions about how time is used and how the school is organized (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). 	
	 Ensuring that teachers have input on decisions about school changes (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). 	
	 Ensuring that teachers have a say in what and how things are done (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). 	
	1.3.3: School leaders communicate frequently and effectively to support shared and transparent decision making (BTLC Program, 2013).	Not Evident Developing
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by	O Partially in Place
	 Tapping the leadership capabilities of those beyond the school administration and those who may not hold formal teacher leader roles (BTLC Program, 2013). 	Already in Place
	 Maintaining routines that support shared responsibility (BTLC Program, 2013). 	
	Communicating with staff about when and why a decision regarding school improvement has been made.	
	 Allowing for cultivation of broad-based leadership capacity (i.e., shared and distributive leadership and responsibility; GLISI, 2015). 	

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

1.3 Evidence

1.3 Next Steps

2. ROLES and RELATIONSHIPS

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
2.1 Vision for Teacher Leadership Roles	District-Level Indicators	
•	2.1.1: District leaders communicate with the teachers' union about teacher leadership roles, workload, and impact (CSTP, 2010).	Not EvidentDeveloping
	District leaders may demonstrate or support this by	O Partially in Place
	 Engaging teachers' union representatives and educators in productive dialogue to foster a common understanding of, and vision for, teacher leadership in the district. 	Already in Place
	 Working with unions to revise any collective bargaining language that creates barriers that prevent teachers from observing and providing feedback to one another (New Leaders, 2015). 	
	School-Level Indicators	
	2.1.2: School leaders work with teacher leaders and teachers as partners (Greenlee, 2007).	O Not Evident
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by sharing ideas about their work with teacher leaders	Developing
	and teachers (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).	O Partially in Place
		Already in Place
	2.1.3: School leaders work to ensure that teacher leaders are seen as leaders by others in their	O Not Evident
	school and trusted by their colleagues.	Developing
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by	O Partially in Place
	 Showing confidence that teacher leaders will implement initiatives with fidelity. 	Already in Place
	 Being available to assist or support teacher leaders when they need to make important decisions or encounter initial resistance. 	-

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

2.1 Evidence

2.1 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
2.2 Clear Goals and Expectations	District-Level Indicators	
Expectations	 2.2.1: District leaders set clear teacher leadership expectations that are distinct from administrative roles (ASCD, 2015; Aspen Institute, 2014). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Communicating teacher leadership expectations to all educators. Creating additional resources or guidance to support school leaders and teacher leaders in developing appropriate teacher leadership goals that are aligned to school improvement goals and priorities (New Leaders, 2015). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	2.2.2: District leaders build coherence and continuity across the system (CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by communicating nonnegotiables for teacher leadership roles and responsibilities while allowing schools to tailor roles to meet their needs.	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	2.2.3: District leaders build flexibility to use teacher leaders according to their talents and school needs (CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by developing criteria and other tools for helping school leaders identify and evaluate individuals who possess the right combination of skills and willingness to fill leadership gaps (GLISI, 2015).	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
	School-Level Indicators	
	2.2.4: School leaders identify criteria for success for teacher leadership using multiple measures and performance indicators (CSTP, 2010).	○ Not Evident○ Developing
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by	O Partially in Place
	 Establishing a measurement system with clear, agreed-on language to outline what successful teacher leadership entails. 	Already in Place
	 Sampling teacher leader goals or making available exemplars that can be used to support teacher leaders (New Leaders, 2015). 	
	Setting clear goals for evaluating teacher leaders in their roles and providing actionable feedback for growth.	
	 Examining state licensure standards and competencies and demonstrating various leadership responsibilities that teacher leaders can strive toward. 	

2.2 Evidence

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

2.2 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
2.3 Ongoing Support for Teachers, Teacher	District-Level Indicators	
Leaders, and School Leaders	 2.3.1: District leaders provide school leaders with professional development to support teacher leadership (Moller, Childs-Bowen, & Scrivner, 2001). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Providing tools, training, and support that enable school leaders to develop differentiated teacher leader roles aligned to school improvement strategies and create systems and structures to support teacher leadership (New Leaders, 2015). Providing support and mentoring for school leaders who are incorporating leadership development into school-based professional development and extend that support to teacher leaders who hold similar responsibilities across the district (New Leaders, 2015). Inviting schools to submit plans to pilot innovative approaches to teacher leader evaluation and support (New Leaders, 2015). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	 2.3.2: School leaders support teacher leadership through formal structures, informal behaviors, coaching, and feedback (Buckner & McDowelle, 2000 (cited in York-Barr, 2004); Heineke & Poinick, 2013). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Celebrating progress related to the school vision (GLISI, 2015). Providing teachers with assistance, guidance, and coaching (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Actively supporting teacher leaders in their roles and among their colleagues. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	 2.3.3: School leaders provide opportunities for teachers to grow knowledge, skills, and competencies (Battelle for Kids, 2015; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Landers, 2013; Phelps, 2008). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Helping teachers take advantage of opportunities to learn new skills (GLISI, 2015). Actively supporting the professional development of teachers (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
	2.3.4: School leaders identify, know, and support teacher strengths (BTLC Program, 2013).	O Not Evident
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by leveraging teacher strengths when developing,	O Developing
	filling, and implementing teacher leadership.	O Partially in Place
		Already in Place

2.3 Evidence

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

2.3 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
3.1 Access to Data and Technology	District-Level Indicators	
and recimiology	3.1.1: District leaders ensure that teacher leaders have access to relevant data systems (CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by identifying the data systems that teacher leaders need to be effective and ensuring access to the data systems.	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	3.1.2: District leaders ensure that teacher leaders have been trained in the use of data systems and data analysis (CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by providing training and support for teacher leaders to access and use data.	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	 3.1.3: School leaders ensure that teacher leaders have access to necessary information, resources, and personnel (CSTP, 2010). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Ensuring that teacher leaders have timely access to data they need for their roles (BTLC Program, 2013). Providing protected time for all teachers to engage in collaborative data inquiry in a variety of settings or teams (BTLC Program, 2013). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

3.1 Evidence

3.1 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
3.2 Access to Materials and Resources for	District-Level Indicators	
Collaboration	3.2.1: District leaders ensure that teacher leaders have access to documents and tools to facilitate collaboration (CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by identifying the documents and tools that teacher leaders need to collaborate effectively and ensure access to these tools and resources.	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	3.2.2: School leaders ensure that teacher leaders have access to protocols and tools to facilitate professional learning among colleagues (CSTP, 2010). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by supporting teacher leaders in developing and	O Not Evident O Developing
	accessing protocols to support their work (e.g., collaborative teacher meeting protocols and coaching and feedback tools).	Partially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

3.2 Evidence

3.2 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
3.3 Recruitment and Selection	District-Level Indicators	
	 3.3.1: District leaders have developed effective strategies to recruit and select teacher leaders. District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Developing hiring tools for teacher leader roles (New Leaders, 2015). Using the results of a fair, accurate, and reliable evaluation and support system to identify effective teacher leaders (New Leaders, 2015). School-Level Indicators 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	 3.3.2: School leaders identify and foster teacher leadership talent (Danielson, n.d.). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Understanding the characteristics predictive of teacher leader effectiveness and screening for such characteristics (New Leaders, 2015). Understanding school leader competencies and responsibilities and determining what responsibilities can be distributed to teacher leaders. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	3.3.3: School leaders fill teacher leader roles using a fair and transparent selection process (Aspen Institute, 2014; Battelle for Kids, 2015). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by communicating recruitment and selecting processes and tools to teachers and involving teachers on teacher leader hiring committees.	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	 3.3.4: School leaders select teacher leaders strategically and thoughtfully to maximize their impact (Battelle for Kids, 2015). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Leveraging strong talent management skills and authority to hire and promote their staff (New Leaders, 2015). Creating teacher leadership positions tailored to meet school needs (New Leaders, 2015). Hiring teacher leaders with the knowledge and skills to meet school improvement needs. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

3.3 Evidence

3.3 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
3.4 Recognition and Compensation	District-Level Indicators	
	3.4.1: District leaders ensure that teacher leaders are compensated for additional workload (salary or stipend; CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by providing more competitive financial incentives (e.g., salary increases or stipends) to teachers ready to lead for taking positions in high-need schools or to teachers who take on additional leadership responsibilities in high-need schools (New Leaders, 2015).	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	3.4.2: School leaders recognize and give credit to teacher leaders for their leadership successes while ensuring that they share responsibility with teacher leaders for problematic or difficult situations or outcomes (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Landers, 2013; Yukon Education, 2013).	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School leaders may demonstrate or support this by	
	 Recognizing and involving teacher leaders in schoolwide meetings and convocations. 	
	 Recognizing and acting when teacher leaders need support to engage in difficult conversations with other teachers. 	
	 Providing competitive financial incentives for teachers to take on leadership responsibilities (New Leaders, 2015). 	

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

3.4 Evidence

3.4 Next Steps

Subdomain	Indicators	Ratings
3.5 Time	District-Level Indicators	
	 3.5.1: District leaders ensure that teacher leaders receive adequate time to fulfill additional workloads (CSTP, 2010). District leaders may demonstrate or support this by Providing funds for school leaders to adequately provide release time for teacher leaders to fulfill their responsibilities. Giving school leaders authority to create school schedules that provide teachers with time to collaborate and lead, including release time to execute their responsibilities (New Leaders, 2015). 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	School-Level Indicators	
	 3.5.2: School leaders provide and protect time for teacher leaders to engage in their roles (Angelle, 2007; BTLC Program, 2013). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Creating school schedules that provide teachers with time to collaborate and lead, including release time to execute their responsibilities (New Leaders, 2015). Managing teacher leader workloads to avoid burnout (GLISI, 2015). Preventing teacher leaders from being pulled away for their leadership responsibilities to engage in other unrelated activities (e.g., covering classrooms and administrative duties). Providing time for productive teacher collaboration and professional learning. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place
	 3.5.3: School leaders provide and protect time for teacher leaders to engage in professional learning and reflection (BTLC Program, 2013). School leaders may demonstrate or support this by Providing time for teachers and teacher leaders to participate in leadership professional learning opportunities. Scheduling regular time for teacher leaders to engage with one another and other school leaders and participate in professional learning opportunities. 	Not EvidentDevelopingPartially in PlaceAlready in Place

Subdomain Indicators Ratings

3.5 Evidence

3.5 Next Steps

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